



## 8127.0 - Characteristics of Small Business, Australia, 1997

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### **More small businesses and more women business operators**

Small businesses operating in Australia have increased by 6.5 per cent since 1995 and more women were involved in operating these business according to results from the 1997 small business owners survey released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

At February 1997 there were 846,300 small businesses in Australia. These business were operated by 1.3 million people (849,600 males and 462,300 female operators), an increase of 4.8 per cent since the previous 1995 survey.

The number of women business operators increased by 9 per cent however, only 10 per cent of small businesses were operated by an individual female or predominantly by females. By comparison 37 per cent of small businesses were predominantly male operated.

More than half (58 per cent) of Australia's small businesses were two operator businesses, a 20 per cent increase since 1995. Over 87 per cent (425,000) of these two operator small businesses were male-female combinations.

There were 466,100 small businesses where the business did not have premises owned or rented other than the home of the operator, while there were 174,400 businesses where most of the work of the business was carried out at the home of the operator.

More people aged over 50 were operating small businesses than two years ago with an increase of 17.4 per cent (or 50,000 people), the largest increase in all age groups. However, most (64 per cent) small business operators were aged between 30 and 50 years.

Almost two thirds of Australian small business operators had some form of qualification with 36 per cent having gained a skilled or vocational qualification and 27 per cent with a degree or diploma.

Nearly all (90 per cent) of the small businesses identified in the survey were considered to be successful by their operators. Seventeen per cent were considered to be highly successful, and these businesses stated that having a quality product or service was the main factor leading to this success.

Details are in **Characteristics of Small Business, Australia 1997** (cat. no. 8127.0).

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